



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Kentucky 2014 highway fatality figures released

Preliminary figures indicate a 4.4 percent increase from 2013

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Jan. 22, 2015) – Highway fatalities in Kentucky increased in 2014 after a record low in 2013.

Kentucky Office of Highway Safety (KOHS) preliminary figures from a Jan. 16 report indicate 667 people lost their lives on Kentucky roadways last year, up from 638 in 2013. However, it was the second lowest total since 1949, when 573 fatalities were recorded.

Transportation Secretary Mike Hancock, who is Gov. Steve Beshear's designated representative for highway safety, said saving lives and reducing serious injuries is a top priority of the administration.

"We are saddened by the fatality increase, and we firmly believe that one fatality is too many," Hancock said. "The Governor's Executive Committee on Highway Safety is committed to providing direction on traffic safety issues as we move 'Toward Zero Deaths' on Kentucky's roadways."

The Executive Committee includes representatives of 18 highway safety agencies and organizations such as KOHS, Kentucky State Police (KSP), federal highway agencies, local law enforcement and emergency services. Its goal is to work cooperatively to update and implement Kentucky's Strategic Highway Safety Plan – "Toward Zero Deaths."

KOHS Executive Director Bill Bell said there were some encouraging trends in 2014 on which to build.

“Because more motorists took responsibility for their driving habits, there were 81 days last year in which no one lost a loved one on our roadways, which is up from 75 days in 2013,” Bell said. “We are committed to focusing our efforts until that number of zero-death days reaches 365.”

Until then, KOHS will analyze highway data to identify existing issues and attempt to predict future problems.

“Another encouraging trend was our alcohol-related crashes, which were down by more than 2 percent,” Bell said. “This is a product of the tireless efforts by law enforcement and prosecutors.”

KSP Commissioner Rodney Brewer says the increase in fatalities during 2014 will not discourage his agency from striving ‘Toward Zero Deaths’ in 2015. “We are utilizing real-time, digital traffic data to identify high crash corridors and increasing patrols and enforcement efforts in those areas.”

“We must continue warning against the dangers of drunken and drugged driving as well as promoting increased seat belt usage,” Bell said. “We’ll also maintain our focus on distracted driving, pedestrian safety, motorcycle safety, mature drivers and booster seat safety.”

The figures will remain classified as preliminary until all highway crash data is collected. A final report is expected by April.

For more information, visit <http://highwaysafety.ky.gov/> and www.kentuckystatepolice.org.

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